# MEAGRISYS


**AN INTEGRATED MONITORING AND EVALUATION (ME) AGRICULTURAL (AGR) INFORMATION (I) SYSTEM (SYS) FOR MEASURING PROGRESS AND IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS TO IMPROVE THE AGRI-FOOD SECTOR AND RURAL LIFE**

# INTRODUCTION

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

# 1: THE AGENDAS: IMPROVING AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE

Caribbean countries have set policies and goals for agriculture that emphasise contributing to gross national income, generating prosperity in rural areas, assuring food and nutrition security and social stability and managing the effective use of natural resources. These policies and goals complement regional, hemispheric and global agendas for agricultural and rural development.

- At the global level, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), targeting at the year 2015, evolved because world leaders unanimously decided (global policy) that focusing on economic growth does not automatically make positive contributions to equitable human development;
- At the hemispheric level, the Summit of the Americas AgroPlan 2003-2015, emerged because the hemispheric leaders decided (hemispheric policy) that working together in the Americas is essential to build on MDGs through actions specifically focused on promoting integrated and sustainable agriculture and rural development. The Agro Plan 2015 represents a hemispheric consensus of a process initiated at the national level in 2001.
- At the regional level, the Jagdeo Initiative (JI) was developed in response to a decision of Caribbean Heads of State Leaders (regional policy) to revitalise the Agri-Food sector to enable its effective functioning in the global economic and trade realities. The focus is on defining and implementing Interventions to alleviate ten Key Binding Constraints that have limited the achievement of sustainable development of agriculture and rural life.

Together, these efforts provide strategic roadmaps to achieving sustained progress towards the development of agriculture and rural communities. In all instances, polices, goals, intentions and focus areas of these agendas are consistent. The only difference is in the strategies and actions pursued by countries, which are ultimately responsible for implementation.

Caribbean countries have all committed to these agendas and Ministries of Agriculture have the primary lead role in defining strategies and implementing actions to achieve their stated goals. Commitments to these goals require thorough preparation of actions and monitoring and evaluation of progress. However, there is a growing concern about the effectiveness of strategies and policies being pursued. Such concern derives in part, from the differences in the perception or concept of agriculture, which in turn, defines the nature and scope of the strategies and actions implemented to make meaningful change in the situation.

These agendas all call for a unity of purpose and consolidation of actions if the overarching goals are to be effectively achieved and the positive impacts sustained. This can only be achieved if there is a common concept of agriculture and rural life and framework for the development of strategies and actions that allow for inter-institutional-agency-actor/stakeholder coordination. To this end, a conceptual framework was developed in consultation with all relevant actors/stakeholders at the national level. This conceptual framework – the AgroMatrix, allows for clarity in the definition of national priorities for an expanded agriculture sector and for establishing clear linkages between and among policy agendas at the national, regional, hemispheric and global levels.

**Global and Regional Goals**

**8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

**Jagdeo Initiative's 10 Key Areas for Intervention**

1. Increase Financing and New Investments
2. Strengthen Agricultural Health and Food Safety systems
3. Strengthen and Coordinate Research and Development
4. Organise and Strengthen the Private Sector
5. Improve land and water management systems
6. Strengthen and Coordinate risk management measures
7. Improve the efficiency of transportation (especially for perishables)
8. Strengthen and integrate Information-Intelligence Systems
9. Strengthen Linkages-Participation in Growth Markets
10. Develop Skilled Human Resources

## 2. ESTABLISHING A COMMON CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK - THE AGROMATRIX

The AgroMatrix promotes an expanded concept of agriculture and rural life. All actions in the agriculture-rural continuum, referred to as a Systemic Concept, are categorised into three operational areas (Arenas for Action). These are: (1) Rural Territories, (2) Agri-Food Value Chains, and the (3) Policy System. Each set of actors in each Arena for Action has expectations that condition decision-making and actions taken. The Systemic Concept underscores the inter-dependence among these three Arenas for Action and the importance of cooperation if the results their combined decisions and actions are to be mutually beneficial.

The AgroMatrix explicitly incorporates all the four Dimensions of the Sustainable Development Concept. These are (a) Economic, (b) Ecological, (c) Social, and (d) Political. These dimensions are integrated into the decision-making and actions of each of actors in the Arenas for Action. These four Dimensions describe or categorise the types of actions that can be taken in the development process.

Combining these two concepts, results in a 4 x 3 AgroMatrix, with 12 Cells, each with a specific Purpose as indicated below.

**THE AGROMATRIX CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

| 3 Arenas for Action / 4 Types of Action | RURAL TERRITORIES | AGRI-FOOD VALUE CHAIN | POLICY SYSTEM | STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Economic (Production & Trade) | I. Promote Competitive Rural Enterprises | II. Forge Linkages, Integrate Chains & Enhance Productivity | III. Build an Enabling Business Environment | Competitiveness |
| Ecological (Environmental) | IV. Promote good environmental practices | V. Promote Integrated Environmental Management | VI. Build a Pro-Eco Institutional Framework | Sustainability |
| Social (Cultural & Human) | VII. Facilitate Improved Quality of Life and Access to Services | VIII. Develop Capabilities, Expertise and Innovation | IX. Promote Policies to Improve Lives and Livelihoods | Equity |
| Political (Institutional) | X. Strengthen Public and Private Sector Partnerships | XI. Strengthen Dialogue, Inter-relationships and Commitments | XII. Promote national policies and external cooperation | Governance |
| STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES | RURAL PROSPERITY + FOOD SECURITY + POSITIONING | | | SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE |

**Technical Note 1: Conceptual Frameworks**

A conceptual framework is assumptions about how a subject matter works that shapes decisions and actions. It is built from concepts linked to a desired vision that assumes some methods, behaviours, functions, objects and relationships. It is used to enhance understanding of complex phenomena, to present a preferred approach and developing possible courses of action. Applied to the AgroMatrix is a tool that can simplify and give order to a set of multiple economic, biological, technical, social and political relations in to understand desires, expectations and behaviour of human beings involved in those relations.

## 3. THE AGROMATRIX: MOVING FROM CONCEPT TO PRACTICE

There is growing concern over the effectiveness of the strategies and polices being promoted to develop agriculture and improve the well-being of the rural population. The concept of the concept "effectiveness" applied to policies for agriculture and the rural milieu, relates to integrating the criteria of technical-economic efficiency and social-political efficacy. This can only be achieved when consensus is reached among the social-political forces that reflect differing economic interests and play a major role in achieving the desired objectives (see document "Improving the Effectiveness of Strategies and Policies: an instrument for analysts, public decision-makers and stakeholders leaders in the field of agriculture and rural life" (2006).

Complex phenomena that involve an array of actors and interests require new institutional mechanisms to understand the desires, expectations and behaviour of the parties involved, any changes in these variables, and their impact on the performance of agriculture and rural life. The use of mechanisms of this kind makes it possible for policymakers to take timely decisions to strengthen or correct specific courses of action designed to achieve the desired objectives. Several other elements are required if these mechanisms are to be effective. Importantly, the design of strategies and policies must be based on a concept of agriculture and rural life that provides a basis for dialogue among the stakeholders and makes it possible to build consensus and secure commitments. The monitoring and evaluation of the strategies adopted must be based on the same concept of agriculture and rural life, so that they produce comparable information that can be used to modify strategies, policies and actions.

The AgroMatrix is viewed as the best framework for facilitating the development, implementation and monitoring of agricultural policies and strategies mechanisms to positively impact, in a sustained manner, on the performance of agriculture and rural life. The AgroMatrix is a useful tool that goes beyond the usual economic indicators of performance. It provides a common basis for consensus building on critical issues and commitment among stakeholders to change a given situation toward a desired shared vision.

Technical Note 2:
Thinking and Acting "Outside of the Box"

It is now fully recognized that agriculture is important as a strategic activity within the socio-economic system and as a way of life for millions of rural inhabitants. This requires that all those involved, regardless of their location in the system or the scope of actions in the various processes must go beyond the restricted area of their immediate responsibility. In essence – all system participants must think and act "outside of the box" if the development process, built on relations among human beings, is to be equitable and sustainable. This is a fundamental requirement for monitoring and evaluating strategies and actions towards the development of agriculture and the improvement of the well-being of the rural communities. Thinking and acting "outside of the box" is needed to deal with desires, expectation and behaviour of the actors/stakeholders within the complex system that is agriculture and rural life.

The AgroMatrix provides a framework for monitoring and evaluation and a common platform for decisions on:

- 'where' to focus development efforts;
- setting practical 'targets';
- determining 'what' actions are/will be required to achieve such development;
- defining the 'players', their 'scope' of actions and interactions, and gaps (who' will 'pick up the slack');
- 'linking' national, regional, hemispheric and international policy agendas to optimise scare human, financial and institutional resources and maximise benefits of interventions towards sustainable agricultural and rural development.

In the Caribbean, it is recognized that the agendas of both the AgroPlan and Jagdeo Initiative share similar objectives that complement the MDGs. It is appreciated that:

- the AgroPlan 2015 provides a more broad and comprehensive framework for agricultural and rural

development, with specific emphasis on issues of governance;

- the AgroPlan 2015 is an ambitious and more explicit agenda, which views agricultural and rural development as an integral part of national development, food security and rural prosperity;
- the Jagdeo Initiative could be considered the Caribbean's regional response to the AgroPlan 2015, with a deliberate emphasis, at this point in time, on pursuing the competitiveness objective of the AgroMatrix.

The major difference between these two agendas is largely in the degree of focus, coverage and timeframe. The region has defined an initial set of actions under the Jagdeo Initiative that emphasize, primarily, but not solely, the competitiveness objective; that is to contribute to the purposes of Cells I, II and III. The AgroMatrix is used to illustrate this.

**Applying the Agromatrix Analysis and Synthesis Tool**

**Example 1: Linking the Agendas – MDGs, AgroMatrix and Jagdeo Initiative**

| THE AGROMATRIX CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 Arenas for Action / 4 Types of Action | RURAL TERRITORIES | AGRI-FOOD VALUE CHAIN | POLICY SYSTEM | STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES |
| Economic (Production & Trade) | Competitive Rural Enterprises | Integrate Chains & Enhance Productivity | Business Environment | Competitiveness |
| Ecological (Environmental) | | | | Sustainability |
| Social (Cultural & Human) | | | | Equity |
| Political (Institutional) | | Strengthen Dialogue, inter-relationships and Commitments | | Governance |
| STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES | RURAL PROSPERITY + FOOD SECURITY + POSITIONING | | | SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE |

The Current focus of the Jagdeo Initiative is on strengthening competitiveness in the Agri-Food sector

The MDGs focus on promoting and achieving broad-based, equitable human and not specifically economic development, with explicit emphasis on equity (MDG 1 and 3), sustainability (MDG 7) and governance (MDG 8). It recognises the pivotal role of agricultural development in contributing to the achievement of specific Goals, including rural development.

**Example 2: Overview of Agricultural Policy Priorities of Trinidad and Tobago**

| Systemic / Sustainable Development | Rural Areas and Stakeholders | AgriFood Value Chain Stakeholders -From farm to table- | Policy Makers National and International | STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Economic Production and Trade | I. Generating sustainable income levels for producers (p.1 2001-2005 Policy Document), and promoting competitive rural enterprises | II. [Making] "... available a secure, safe and wholesome food supply..." (2001-2005 Sector Policy) and facilitating the production of a wide range of high quality value-added products (p21. FBI Strategic Plan) | III. Developing the Logistical Support Network - especially IT (p33 FBI Strategic Plan); establishing priorities for RTDE based on commodity priorities; and creating linkages and partnerships among institutions and stakeholders in the sector (p.65 Vision 2020) | Competitiveness |
| Ecological Environmental | IV. Protecting plant and animal bio-diversity and conserving, enhancing and contributing to the sustainable management of the national environment and the rural landscape (pp. 9 and 77 Vision 2020) | V. Stimulating growth and employment in other sectors such as tourism and agro-industry (2001-2005 Sector Policy); and contributing to the maintenance of the integrity of the environment (Vision 2020) | VI. Building an enabling regulatory and institutional framework by fostering best resource management, physical infrastructure and institutional support (Vision 2020) | Sustainability |
| Social Cultural - Human | VII. Facilitating improved quality of life by creating know-how/training and opportunity among community based groups, youths in particular e.g. Grow Box, Aquaculture | VIII. [Encouraging farmers] "... to extend primary farming into value-added products..." (CARONI – Budget Speech 2006) | IX. Promoting a community-centred and directed approach to development for the rural communities (Vision 2020) | Equity |
| Political - Institutional | X. Promoting public and private sector participation and cooperation by association among domestic value chain partners (FBI Strategic Plan) | XI. Strengthening dialogue, partnerships and commitments among actors in the chain through the medium of private-sector led entities – as under the Standing Committee on Business Development, and Joint Ventures | XII. Improving the policy framework for agricultural investments, sectoral growth and improved efficiencies; promoting regional and hemispheric cooperation, in particular CSME; and keeping stakeholders informed with timely and relevant information on developments (p. 77 Vision 2020) | Governance |
| STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES | Rural Prosperity | Food Security | International Positioning | "... by 2020 ... a competitive [sector] and [one that will] possess the capacity to sustain competitiveness..." |

## 3. DESCRIBING THE AGROMATRIX: THE 3 ARENAS FOR ACTION AND THEIR ACTORS

Rural Territories are described as a community of persons in areas/zones demarcated as 'rural', who interact within their community to improve their economic and social conditions.

In the development process, it is the expectation that rural:

- economies support both agricultural and non-agricultural economic activities;
- producers use environmentally–friendly practices and technologies and sustainable management of natural resources;
- inhabitants enjoy a quality of life enhanced through decent employment opportunities and access to basic services;
- societies promote strong and all-inclusive mechanisms for dialogue and participation in the development process.

Rural entrepreneurship, i.e., finding a unique blend of resources, either inside or outside of agriculture, is essential to sustain healthy rural communities, reduce the rural-urban drift and enhance the rural environment. Rural businesses produce a mix of agricultural and/or non-agricultural products and services. In the Economic Dimension of the AgroMatrix, this is the only real distinguishing factor.

The AgroMatrix recognizes that while agriculture has been the economic base of rural areas, as a result of the development process, agriculture, particularly primary farm production, is increasingly becoming less dominant as an economic activity. The base of a farm business has been widened to include all the non-agricultural uses that available resources can be put to or through any major changes in land use or level of production other than those related solely to agriculture. This holds far-reaching implications for the policies and strategies pursued to ensure that favourable conditions exist to sustain equitable human development in rural territories.

Agri-Food Value Chains define the entire Agri-Food Value Chains define the entire value chain, from farm (whether in rural or urban areas) to table. This interpretation conceptually and operationally reconnects farming and farm production to post-farm Agri-Food value chain at all times. It explicitly includes non-food agricultural-based activities, products and services.

In the Economic Dimension of the AgroMatrix, this is the only distinction of relevance in the Agri-Food chain. In this context, value adding is not synonymous with processing, but increasingly embodies knowledge and intellectual capital inputs, packaging innovation and strategic marketing.

In the development process, it is the expectation:

- each link in the Agri-Food chain adds up- and down-stream value to another, to supply safe, healthy and quality food and non-food products and services that enter domestic and foreign markets;
- all production and distribution activities and operations use processes and technologies that maximize information and communication flows, enhance the environment, reduce the risks (natural hazards and/or man-made) and mitigate their adverse consequences.

Actors in Rural Territories and Agri-Food Value Chains are the 'real' players in the Economic arena. It is their independent production and marketing decisions and actions, when combined, that determine the nature, scope and rate of growth of total output in the agricultural and rural sectors, and the level of pressures on the natural resources used in the process. It is not the decision or actions of governments or policy makers. These real actors – entrepreneurs - have the most at stake and have more to lose or win from poor policy decisions and ill-designed interventions.

The Policy System is where policy decisions and interventions are designed and implemented. It is the actions in this arena that are largely responsible for creating the environment within which 'real' actors in the agriculture-rural complex operate. Policy-makers concept of agriculture and rural life and their expectations of the development process will determine the type of policies and programmes pursed to enable such development. The scope and nature of the actions of rural and Agri-Food chain actors are very heavily influenced by the actions of policy makers, at both the national and international levels.

In the development process, it is the expectation that national and international policies and interventions must:

- ensure effective management of agricultural development through greater access to efficient services, technologies and infrastructure;
- facilitate improved conditions of market access and expand trade opportunities for a wide basket of products that compete in the absence of preferences and trade distorting subsidies and barriers;
- foster and promote a better quality of life for rural residents and the general population, through its positive and broad impacts on productivity, health and food security.

# 4. DESCRIBING THE AGROMATRIX: THE 4 TYPES OF ACTION AND THEIR KEY ISSUES

## 4.1 ECONOMIC

The Economic Dimension of sustainable development, or types of actions, represents the productive sectors of an economy and is driven by the need to achieve and sustain Competitiveness. Competitiveness should not be an end in itself, but a means to an end - leading to better standards of living for all. Economic growth is an over-riding objective of all developing countries and agriculture plays a pivotal role in the socio-economic development process. Building national financial, human and institutional capital for stimulating and sustaining the economic viability of agriculture and rural areas is a development priority.

The Strategic Objective of the Economic Dimension is increasing and sustaining 'Competitiveness'. Krugman and Porter (1990) caution, that focusing on competitiveness at the national level can be detrimental to a country's welfare. Both emphasise that it is individual firms, not nations that compete for both domestic and foreign markets. Efforts to enhance competitiveness at a national level without regard to the specific advantages of firms or industries may not yield positive welfare consequences for the nation as a whole. In order to maximize the welfare of the nation, resources should be directed toward those firms or industries that possess the greatest potential advantage.

The AgroMatrix defines three specific Purposes for promoting competitiveness in the three distinct but inter-related Arena for decision making and actions. These are:

I. Promote competitive enterprises (both agriculture and non-agriculture business) in Rural Territories (AgroMatrix Cell I);
II. Forge linkages, Integrate Chains and Enhance Productivity in the entire Agri-Food Value Chain (AgroMatrix Cell II);
III. Build an Enabling Business Environment through enabling national and international Policies (AgroMatrix Cell III).

The perceptions, decisions, actions and interventions of all players in the Economic Dimension will determine the pace and quality of progress towards these the Competitiveness along the lines of these specific Purposes. These purposes seek to directly support MDGs 1, 7, 8; and JI's Priorities for Intervention 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. They also indirectly contribute to MDGs 3 and 7; and JI 10.

Competitive Business, whether located in rural or urban areas, or built on agriculture or non-agriculture products and services, is fully within the decision-making and actions of the individual entrepreneur (Cell I and II). Government services and interventions (Cell III) aimed at influencing this decision making process seeks to create the national business environment conducive to the emergence and rapid expansion of productive businesses at all levels and innovative products. Productivity, innovation and business acumen are key to sustaining growth and competitiveness.

### Key Issues

- Entrepreneurship development and business capacities (create market orientation);
- Productive Infrastructure (reduce transactions costs, enhance efficiency);
- Science, Technology and Research for development, innovative, quality products and services and efficient and productive processes and operations;
- Financial and Non-Financial Services (risk mitigation, professional advice, market information etc), to sustain competitiveness and growth;
- Practical Policies that enable development of competitive business;
- Regulated and transparent business environment through and standards, guidelines for production and process methods, strategic alliances (joint ventures, contracting), access to technologies and protection of intellectual property, labelling advertising and marketing etc
- Industry integration and networking through organisational building, clustering, associations, cooperatives etc.
- ….n

### 4.2 ECOLOGICAL

The Ecological Dimension of sustainable development, or types of actions, is concerned with the way that available natural resources are used in productive economic activity, community building and maintenance of biodiversity. It seeks to preserve the self-renewing capacity of eco-systems towards Environmental Sustainability.

Actions and development policy, whether at the sectoral or integrated national policy level, will affect the use and management of natural resources. It will also determine the country's capacity to build resilience to natural hazards and reduce the severity of the economic, social and environmental impacts of such disasters. The extent of ecological sustainability is determined in part by the pattern of socio-economic development. Agricultural, fisheries, manufacturing, housing, tourism, health and other services, transport and energy are among the more critical users of natural resources. Amidst these expanded economic activities, the environment is still expected to provide services related to biodiversity and clean water and air. Ecological sustainability is also a factor of natural resource management and risk management policies and strategies. Deficiencies in these areas compromise sustainable resource management and country's physical and economic resilience to environmental and climate change risks.

For the Caribbean, the MDGs note that environmental sustainability is particularly important, with important critical issues being deforestation, river-basin degradation, waste disposal, over-fishing, air pollution, biodiversity conservation and energy efficiency, with the effects of climate change and the protection of coral reefs or particular significance. Since their natural resources, however limited, form an essential platform for growth, Caribbean countries must adopt a strategic approach to sustainable resource management that preserves the self-renewing capacity of eco-systems for long-term economic growth and social well-being. Ecological Sustainability whether at the level of the Rural Territory or in Agri-Food Value Chain, must be built on sustainable resource management principles and resilience to natural hazards. In promoting Environmental Sustainability, the AgroMatrix defines three specific Purposes according to the Arena for decision making and actions. These are:

IV. Promote good environmental practices (in all productive activities within agriculture and non-agriculture business and domestic life) in Rural Territories (AgroMatrix Cell IV);
V. Promote Integrated Environmental Management in the entire Agri-Food Value Chain (AgroMatrix Cell V);
VI. Build an eco-friendly institutional framework (AgroMatrix Cell VI).

These purposes seek to directly support MDG 7, and 8 and JI's Priorities for Intervention 5. They will also indirectly contribute to MDGs 1 and 3; and are critical to sustain any gains that may be achieved under all of the other JI Priorities for Intervention.

**Key Issues**

- Pro-environmental Policies that engender a culture of good practices in all economic and non-economic actions;
- Public awareness and dialogue on environmental and natural resource issues (create a pro-environment business culture);
- Infrastructure design to minimise adverse environmental impacts;
- Science, Technology and Research to enhance quality of existing resources and restore degraded resources;
- Good pro-environment practices in all economic and non-economic activities;
- Financial and Non-Financial Services to provide incentives to adopt pro-environment processes;
- Industry norms, standards, regulations and pro-environment processes

….n

## 4.3 SOCIAL

The Social Dimension of sustainable development, or types of actions, considers the cultural aspects and interactions among members of a society, with the objective of achieving and sustaining an equitable relationship – Equity. Webster's dictionary provides selected definitions of equity as "the quality of being fair or impartial; fairness, impartiality," and social "of pertaining to the life, welfare and relations of human beings." The concept of social equity is also used to refer to a set of standards which apply to personal and social relationships with other individuals and/or groups. The term also covers the protection of certain fundamental rights which all citizens of a free society enjoy.

Social equity is seen as a contentious and vital issue for planners and society as a whole. Planners must address issues that will effect improvements in lives, livelihoods and communities. However, the focus of attention is usually on physical development and land use. Progress towards equity will require comprehensive planning activities to consider the social implications of all development actions and interventions. This has led to a growing significance of 'equity planning' or 'pro-poor' policies and strategies in international development assistance. Integrating social equity into planning activities leads to greater social inclusion and participation, expansion of opportunities, and the creation of more choices for the vulnerable, and as well, the wider community.

The MDGs fully recognize that enhancing equity is an important means of increasing the impact on poverty reduction. The achievement of a certain threshold is crucial for building human capital and reducing the vulnerability of low-income sectors. Growth alone will not make the distribution of income or assets more equitable or effectively redress the problems of social exclusion. Social goals cannot be met until they become prime objectives of economic policy. Development strategies should therefore emphasize economic policies geared towards improving social equity as an effective means of guaranteeing economic, social and cultural rights and boosting economic growth. (The Millennium Development Goals, A Latin America and Caribbean Perspective, United Nations Publications August 2005).

The balancing of social equity with growth and good governance is at the heart of national building and policy formulation. This has always been so but at certain times, achieving this balance becomes even more pertinent as nations confront new challenges and new decisions. While challenges may be similar across countries and the principles of good governance widely accepted, there is plenty of room for different approaches, national priorities and institutional solutions to achieve social equity (OECD 2001).

Since agriculture is recognised as playing a key role in promoting Social Equity, the AgroMatrix defines three specific Purposes according to the Arena for decision making and actions, as:

VII. Facilitate improved quality of life and access to services in Rural Territories (AgroMatrix Cell VII);
VIII. Develop Capabilities, Expertise and Innovation in the entire Agri-Food Value Chain (AgroMatrix Cell VIII);
IX. Promote policies to improve lives and livelihoods in the entire agriculture-rural complex (AgroMatrix Cell IX).

Key Issues
- Poverty reduction and food security
- Access to social services (health, education,)
- Access to productive resources and services
- Creation of employment opportunities
- Providing opportunities for dialogue
- Social protection
- Cultural diversity
- Equity in delivery of public goods and services
- Capacity building
- ….n.

## 4.4 POLITICAL

The Political/Institutional Dimension of sustainable, or types of actions, defines the governance and regulatory framework that is required at all levels to facilitate competitiveness. It also governs the conditions that facilitate environmental sustainability and how the wealth that is generated is distributed among members of the society (equity). The objective is Governance.

The concept of "governance" is not new. It is as old as human civilization and refers to the process of how decisions and made and implemented (or not implemented). Governance can be used in several contexts, such as, corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance. Governance analysis usually focuses on the formal and informal actors involved in decision-making and the formal and informal structures that have been set in place to arrive at and implement the decision. Government is one of the actors in governance. Other actors vary depending on the level of government that is under discussion. In rural areas, for example, other actors may include influential landowners, small farmer associations, cooperatives, NGOs, research institutes, religious leaders, finance institutions, political parties, youth and women's groups. The situation in urban areas is more complex. At the national level, other actors, such as, media, lobbyists, international donors, multi-national corporations, also play a role in decision-making or in influencing the decision-making process.

The terms "governance" and "good governance" are being increasingly used in development literature. Major donors and international financial institutions are increasingly basing their aid and loans on the condition that reforms that ensure "good governance" are undertaken. The major characteristics of good governance are that it is participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society. While few countries and societies have come close to achieving good governance in its totality, sustainable human development requires that actions be taken towards this goal. http://www.unescap.org/huset/gg/governance.htm

Building 'social capital' is essential to achieve and sustain good governance. Social capital is the cumulative capacity of social groups to cooperate and work together for the common good. It refers to the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions. Increasing evidence shows that social cohesion is critical for societies to prosper economically and for development to be sustainable. Social capital is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society – it is the glue that holds them together. World Bank- http://web.worldbank.org/

In promoting Good Governance, the AgroMatrix defines three specific Purposes according to the Arena for decision making and actions. These are:

X. Strengthen Public and Private Sector Partnerships cooperation (for delivery of technical and social support services) in Rural Territories (AgroMatrix Cell X);
XI. Strengthen Dialogue, Inter-relationships and Commitments among all actors in the Agri-Food Value Chain (AgroMatrix Cell XI);
XII. Promote enabling national policies and external cooperation at the policy and institutional level ((AgroMatrix Cell XII).

Key Issues
- Empowerment and developing social capital;
- Institutions and mechanisms for all-inclusive participation, cooperation and coordination;
- Decentralisation;
- Strategic alliances and partnerships;
- Negotiating skills and capacity;
- ….n

## 5. THE SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS MANDATE: MONITOR AND EVALUATE PROGRESS

The AgroPlan and Jagdeo Initiative provide 'strategic roadmaps' in defining actions for agricultural development and the improvement of the well-being of the rural communities. However, the responsibility for implementing and managing such actions lies squarely at the national level. Such responsibility has created additional demands, particularly given the emphasis on accountability and measuring of progress and impact of the development actions. It is clear that in order to match those demand, the range of information that needs to be mobilized goes beyond the one that responds to the traditional concept of agriculture as a primary production sector. The AgroMatrix provides a renewed concept of agriculture that takes into consideration the new reality.

The Hemispheric Heads of State and Government, in recognizing the need for such an information system, mandated this task to IICA and UN-ECLAC. They also called on other members of the community of International Organizations to actively support and contribute to the process. Given the importance of The Jagdeo Initiative to the Caribbean and in the context of positioning agriculture in the CSME, such an information system will also be critical to measure progress towards achieving regional goals.

Monitoring and Evaluation are not abstract concepts! They are meaningless unless grounded in desired outcomes stated prior to the exercise. The aim is to develop an information system for monitoring and evaluating the Agro Plan, with application to the Jagdeo Initiative. Developing this information system is another opportunity for genuine partnerships and cooperation of all actors at the local (rural), national and international levels who are responsible for and interested in the sustainable development of agriculture and rural life. Tangible benefits to be derived from this process of building an M&E information system include improved project management, generation of information and knowledge to determine progress, effectiveness and improve decision making for initiating change and improvements and achieving greater accountability.

Technical Note 3
M&E - Setting the Record Straight

M&E (Monitoring and Evaluation) has become an increasingly important subject.

- Monitoring is input for the evaluation, which in turn will indicate if the movement is toward the objective or away from it. It is the measurement through time that indicates the status and trends of the subject of interest. It also involves determining if identified proposed and/or probable activities were implemented.
- Evaluation is concerned with the causes of a deviation and will recommend alternative actions. It is where the learning occurs, questions answered, recommendations made and improvements suggested. It goes hand in hand with monitoring since it puts the raw data provided by monitoring, to use and thus gives them value. Without monitoring, evaluation would have no foundation; no raw material to work with; and be limited to speculation.

An M&E program should not be defined without clearly knowing how the data and information will be collected, evaluated and used. Countries cannot afford to collect and store data that are not used. M&E

| Logical Flow for M&E | |
|---|---|
| Policy and Goal: | eg. Promoting competitive rural business |
| Expectations: | List them…. |
| Targets: | Set targets designed to bring expectations into reality. Targets must match expectations; eg. Achieving 50% growth in existing and new rural business by 2015 |
| Indicators: | A measure to determine, over time, performance of functions, processes, and outcomes |
| Plan of Action: | or Strategy, to determine the set of actions necessary to achieve targets |
| Experiences: | Reporting on outcomes and challenges |

# 6. GROUNDING THE AGROMATRIX:

## 6.1 THE LEARNING PROCESS IN THE CARIBBEAN

From 2003, Caribbean countries have been involved, simultaneously, in hemispheric and regional processes to revitalize the agricultural sector and improve rural life. This has been evident in actions to strengthen national agricultural policy processes in member states.

Caribbean countries, represented by their Ministerial and/or Alternative Delegates, have agreed to define and implement a set of actions to achieve the purpose of each of the 12 AgroMatrix Cells. While each country's actions contribute, albeit in different weights, to the purpose of each of the 12 AgroMatrix cells, the region has defined an initial set of actions under the Jagdeo Initiative that emphasize, primarily but not solely, the competitiveness objective; that is to contribute to the purposes of Cells I, II and III.

Through regional workshops since 2004, a wider cross-section of actors in the Caribbean Agri-Food system has improved their understanding of both the Agro Plan and its Agro Matrix and the Jagdeo Initiative, albeit in separate processes. For the Jagdeo Initiative, this began with an initial regional workshop (August 2004) to define the context and framework for a round of national consultations to identify constraints to agriculture. This was followed by another workshop (December 2004) to present the results of these national consultations and to clearly define ten Key Binding Constraints and indicative Interventions to Alleviate same.
The Agro 2015 plan has been accepted as the best framework for the development, implementation and monitoring of agricultural plans. The Agro 2015 also identified an initial set of 216 indicators reflecting a range of ways to measure the extent to which short and long term goals and objectives of the plans are being achieved. The challenge is therefore to identify the indicators that are best suited to the CARICOM situation. This process was initiated in August 2005, through a Workshop on Benchmarking Indicators for Follow-up of the Agro 2015 Plan.

Technical Note 4:
Thinking and Acting "Outside of the Box"

It is now fully recognized that agriculture is important as a strategic activity within the socio-economic system and as a way of life for millions of rural inhabitants. This requires that all those involved, regardless of their location in the system or the scope of actions in the various processes must go beyond the restricted area of their immediate responsibility. In essence – all system participants must think and act "outside of the box" if the development process, built on relations among human beings, is to be equitable and sustainable. This is a fundamental requirement for monitoring and evaluating strategies and actions towards the development of agriculture and the improvement of the well-being of the rural communities. Thinking and acting "outside of the box" is needed to deal with desires, expectation and behaviour of the actors/stakeholders within the complex system that is agriculture and rural life.

## 6.2 THE CARIBBEAN PROJECT TO BUILD A HYBRID INFORMATION SYSTEM

The agendas of the AgroPlan and Jagdeo Initiative have been integrated due to the fact that both require an information system to monitor progress and measure impact. What has emerged, is that the information base to enable comprehensive and continuous assessment of the impact of policies, programmes and actions on their stated goals is largely absent in several Caribbean countries or incomplete. Many of the current agricultural information systems (AIS) focus on quantitative information (producer, production, trade statistics etc) that can only indicate the movement (growth or decline) and changes in same (stability or volatility) over time. These quantitative 'Indicators' measure progress, but cannot, in themselves explain the 'why' behind these outcomes/results. Assessment of progress towards goals, at any point in time, or impact of actions between time periods, can no longer be 'guestimated', based on individual perceptions. There must be some minimum information system that establishes a base from which progress can be measures against. With the extremely limited resources now available for agricultural development, a relevant and functional information system in agriculture is an absolute imperative.

Effective AIS that incorporate information other than quantitative indicators are critical if the situation in agriculture and rural life is to be adequately measured and explained. Effective AIS must integrally be built on quantitative as well as critical qualitative or descriptive information at the macro, and more importantly, the micro levels. Such an evolved AIS with will require new inter-institutional arrangements and mechanisms that facilitate the emergence of and continuity of robust and connected information systems in countries of the Caribbean.

IICA, with technical partnership from ECLAC and financing from the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) introduced a project "Building a Caribbean Monitoring and Evaluation Information System for the Agro 2015 and Jagdeo Initiative" in February 2006. Through this project, the Caribbean was the first region in the Americas to implement the mandate. The project seeks to lead to the progressive and systematic improvement of the decision-making process for agriculture and rural life, with positive externalities equitably distributed throughout the entire agricultural community. It will do so by making critical quantitative data and qualitative information more readily available on a timely basis. It will consolidate reporting mechanisms and act as a tool to inform policy formulation and identify areas for cooperation between and across countries.

Technical Note 5:
Defining an Information System

Simply defined, an information system is the arrangement of people, data, processes, presentation of data, and information technology that supports our everyday needs. Key elements are collection, data, storage/retrieval, processes, monitoring, planning, evaluation, reporting and making recommendations.

What Drives AIS?

- Fulfilling domestic policy requirements: Governments need information to economic development and determine the trade offs between/within sectors. The quality of agricultural information will influence how it emerges from the mix.
- Facilitating the agribusiness community: Businesses need information on genuine opportunities and their comparative market positioning. Access to timely and credible information is critical for decision-making and competitive strategies.
- Complying with external obligations: Countries are required to report on actions as part of their external obligations. The information provided will determine compliance, progress and their commitment to agreed goals and actions.

In their ordering, satisfying requests and requirements of external obligations almost always drives the need to source, analyse and report agricultural information in the Caribbean. That situation is no longer prudent.

The project 'Building an Agricultural Monitoring and Evaluation Information System for Agro 2015 and Jagdeo Initiative" was initiated in response to:

- the Ministerial Agreement of Guayaquil (August, 2005), which endorsed the need for developing an information system to follow-up and measure progress towards meeting the objectives of the Agro Plan and the Jagdeo Initiative; and
- the demands and recommendations for a functional and responsive information system in agriculture that emerged from the previous above-mentioned regional, as well as other related activities at the national level.

The project seeks to build an M&E Agricultural Information System (MEAgrISys) to measure progress towards Agro Plan 2015 and Jagdeo Initiative to enhance policy and decision-making and mobilize resources for agricultural and rural development in the Caribbean. At the end of the project, it is expected that participating countries will have:

- information on the major actors in agricultural information services and their scope of operations;
- well-defined methodologies and inter-institutional mechanisms for building a Monitoring and Evaluation Information Systems;
- a common set of Indicators for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Agro 2015 Plan and Jagdeo Initiative and progress in agricultural development according to four specific dimensions of development and three areas of actions;
- an enhanced understanding and strengthened competencies to manage information systems;
- a report on the performance and state of agriculture and rural life at the national and regional levels.

Project Activities:

- Workshops: to introduce the AgroMatrix and project to key stakeholders and strategic partners and obtain understanding of its elements and support for implementation;
- Information and Communication – through AIS inventory and website: to document existing national systems and capacities, locate major sources of data and information and determine the gaps to be addressed, including training requirements and provide information on the project and related activities;
- Information system development – through the MEAgrISys which will use information and communication tools to:
  - capture, store, analyse data, manage information and enhance understanding of the true contribution of agriculture to sustainable development in the Caribbean.
  - 'build' an information system to monitor progress and evaluate impact of agricultural development actions.
  - link and strengthen existing national agricultural information systems and coordinate them through a regional information network.
- Build National Capacities through the introduction of practical tools and systems for collecting, storing, analyzing and reporting on information, based on existing successful systems in the region and strengthen national capacities to manage information and communication in agriculture.

The major beneficiaries of the project are expected to be:

- Ministers of Agriculture, representing Heads of State and Government, who have the primary responsibility for implementing the Agro 2015 Plan and the Jagdeo Initiative and managing national agricultural development;
- Government policy analysts /advisors and senior officers, who will have access to information for improved policy formulation and programme development, tools to measure progress and impact at various stages in the implementation;
- Agriculture stakeholders, who will have current and balanced information on progress and impact of development initiatives for enhanced decision making; and
- International, hemispheric and regional organisations responsible for mobilizing support for agricultural development at national, sub-regional and regional levels.

## 6.4 THE HYBRID MEAGRISYS AT A GLANCE

The Hybrid MEAgrISys seeks to provide the countries of the Caribbean with an information system for measuring and evaluating progress towards the objectives of the Agro Plan and the Jagdeo Initiative agendas. The Hybrid MEAgrISys will incorporate three essential, complementary and mutually-reinforcing components:

- Expectations, that will solicit, document and analyse the views and perceptions of key stakeholders to provide a glimpse into the future;
- Performance; built primarily on quantitative and measurable economic indicators that will provide information of the direction and rate of change between periods.
- Experiences, which will be based on actions that countries are undertaking towards the implementation of these agendas and the challenges faced in implementing development actions that will provide valuable lessons to be learned;

However, in order for the data to be relevant and useful, the three components of the information system must be based on the same conceptual framework, which is, in this case, the AGRO Matrix. The basic foundation of the information system is how agriculture and rural life are understood; in other words, recognizing explicitly the many different actors and interests involved in agriculture and rural life. This will facilitate an understanding of the different forces that are affecting the evolution of agriculture and rural life. Combining these three components into a hybrid AIS will provide a more balanced view on the real situation in agriculture, providing more probable explanations on what contributed to the outcomes, identifying likely impacts and indicating the requisite policy adjustments needed. Given past experiences in developing AIS, key lessons that are being learned in implementing the project are the need to focus encourage ownership and cooperation and build capacity where it matters most - at the country level.

This will only be achieved if the information system builds on what already exists; responds the real need for satisfying a range of information requirements and reporting obligations requirements and becomes a functional tool than improves operational efficiencies. The project fully recognizes the capacity and work already being undertaken by regional and international organizations. It will not rebuild or duplicate ongoing efforts. The project will only succeed if commitment, capacity and cooperation exist among all actors involved directly and indirectly in the implementing the project. In essence, the information system needed should have five distinctive characteristics:

1. it must have as its basic foundation a shared conceptual framework that makes it easier for stakeholders to understand the complex nature of agriculture and rural life, in light of a set of objectives and a desired vision;
2. it must have a structure that will generate pertinent, up-to-date and timely information on the evolution of agriculture, on the desires, expectations and behaviour of the three types of stakeholders (Rural, Agri-Food and Policy Makers) and on their impact on agriculture, rural life and their interaction with the rest of society;
3. it must define a dynamic that will facilitate the ongoing learning process of the stakeholders, in order to gradually make the strategies and policies for agriculture and rural life more effective in achieving the objectives and the desired vision;
4. it must be developed following a gradual and modular strategy, taking into account what exists in each country and the real possibilities of developing the system, so as to progress from the possible to the ideal;
5. it must have mechanisms for disseminating its results, to ensure that the benefits reach not only those directly interested, but also the population in general so they can enhance their understanding of the “true” contribution of agriculture and rural life to the overall development of the country.

# 7. THE HYBRID MEAGRISYS EXPLAINED

## 7.1 EXPLAINING THE EXPECTATIONS COMPONENT

Expectations are defined as the views and perceptions of key actors/players in each AgroMatrix arena of action that provide an opinion on past efforts and a glimpse into the future on how past and current efforts will evolve and perceptions of whether stated goals will be achieved. These views and perceptions of key actors/players will be obtained through feedback mechanisms – surveys and/or questionnaire - designed to determine the Expectations of each group regarding sustainable agriculture along the four dimensions of sustainable development, namely, Economic, Ecological, Socio-Cultural Human and Political-Institutional, each with the objective of Competitiveness, Environment, Equity and Governance, respectively.

The first Expectations survey undertaken in 2001 was used as the basis of developing the AgroMatrx concept and Agro Plan 2003-2015. It is expected that the questionnaire will be upgraded and administered every two years in keeping with the scheduling of reporting under to the Hemispheric Heads on progress in the Agro Plan. The Methodology for developing and administering the Questionnaire is described herein.

**Methodology for Questionnaires**

1. Define the Purpose of Questionnaire: To measure expectations and opinions that will lead into expectations. Opinions refer to past and present situation and expectations refer to future. This distinction will determine the type of analysis and wording of the questions. It must identify key leaders in each group, and development dimension, identify the core issues of interest for actors in each system; and focus the questions towards the specific target group of actors. **One-type-questionnaire-does-not-fit-all**
2. Build questionnaire on the Purpose of Each Cell. The type of analysis required per Purpose will be clearly defined. This will ensure that questions take into account the Shared Vision, which will identify the Key Elements. The questions should not be built in the key elements of the dimensions individually since that will lead to an unmanageable set of questions and a too high level of specificity. A brief definition of terms/concepts where appropriate should be included as a guide to the respondent's thought process and enhance the quality of the response.
3. Develop questions based on the Purpose of Each Cell. The questions will focus on the Specific Purpose of the Cell and will also include 1 or 2 general questions on the Strategic Objective of Dimension. Simple language and 'closed questions' will be used, with emphasis on the actor/player and including questions related to the other two actors/players stakeholders categories. The final questions per actor/player will focus on the three broad Strategic Objectives of Rural Prosperity, Food Security and Positioning.
4. Define the maximum number and validity of questions per Cell: Structure questions to obtain opinions and expectations (see #1) Questions to be included must contribute directly to the type of analysis required per Purpose.
5. Define the structure of questions: List a range of options for response. Use combination formats based on the type of analysis required per Purpose.
6. Subject-Matter Expert Review
7. Rationalize Questions by Dimensions and Cell (to determine final set)
8. Develop Stakeholder Questionnaire (by Column) for Testing
9. Refine and Finalise Questionnaire.
10. Define mechanisms for Administration, such as electronically interviews (face-to-face; telephone); workshops, focus groups, surface post, or through networks.

A sample of the revised Expectations Questionnaire focused on Cell I is provided below.

## SAMPLE EXPECTATIONS QUESTIONNAIRE

Target: Rural Stakeholders
Subject: Promoting Competitive Rural Business
Objective: To determine the expectations relating to achieving and sustaining competitive rural-based businesses (agriculture and non-agriculture).
Inputs for Analysis: Perceptions and opinions about the past and current situation and expectations about the situation will evolve;

Questions:
Which of the following activities do you expect will offer the best opportunities for profitable small (rural) businesses:

| | Excellent | Average | Fair | Poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Agriculture, Fisheries, Livestock | | | | |
| Tourism (tour guides, farm tours, bed & breakfast) | | | | |
| Handicraft: | | | | |
| Retail shops | | | | |
| Services (transport, hair & body care, etc) | | | | |
| Construction | | | | |
| Other – specify >>> | | | | |

2. Indicate (✓) which of the above business opportunities you expect to be involved in.

| | |
|---|---|
| Agriculture | |
| Tourism (tour guides, farm tours, bed & breakfast) | |
| Handicraft: | |
| Retail shops | |
| Services (transport, hair & body care, etc) | |
| Construction | |
| Other – specify>>> | |

3. Which of these Agriculture activities you expect would offer the best opportunities for profitable business (1 = highest):
[ ] Crops: specify (organics, herbals, etc)
[ ] Livestock [ ] Fishing/Aquaculture [ ] Environmental services
[ ] Food-processing [ ] Bio-fuels [ ] Landscaping
[ ] Other: specify

4. Why would you consider starting a business in the selected opportunities?
[ ] Existing skill and knowledge
[ ] Government support; [ ] NGO/private sector support; [ ] Good markets/demand (local, tourism, export)
[ ] Own/family funds; [ ] Available credit; [ ] Stable business environment
[ ] Opportunities for group formation
[ ] Other: specify

….. continued

## 7.2 EXPLAINING THE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS COMPONENT

An 'Indicator' it is like a 'pointer' or 'marker' for a something, at a point in time that has value and expresses meanings. It is more than a statistic and is based on accepted indicators to measure progress or movement toward a stated goal or target. The Indicators are the basis for measuring performance in each of the four dimensions of development at two levels: the macro (national and sectoral) and the micro (each Cells or Actor/Player) as they relate to progress achieved towards the stated purpose of the AgroMatrix and Jadgeo Initiative. Traditionally, performance analysis of agriculture takes a macro-sectoral approach, generally based on economic indicators. When measured over a period of time, such as, the past five or ten years, such indicators can track progress, measure performance, identify trouble spots in the sector and show-up important trends. Some national data, such as, economic output and productivity, research and development, prices and productivity in the agriculture sector, among others, are systematically collected.

The systemic concept of agriculture and rural life, integrated into the sustainable development approach, poses challenges in terms monitoring and evaluating same. The scope of the Shared Vision for 2015 goes beyond agricultural production and trade to include ecological, social and institutional considerations. This made it necessary to develop a broad set of indicators that find relevance and applicability to each of the 34 member states of the Summit Process individually, and as the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) group. When properly and consistently applied, these indicators will assist countries to define their goals, implement and monitor strategic actions and adopt further decisions to improve agriculture and rural life at the national, regional and hemispheric levels.

This component concerns trends in the performance of agriculture and rural life. A basic set of topics and indicators are used, which are organized according to the twelve cells of the AgroMatrix. The results of the analysis of this data should be keyed to their contribution to the 12 Purposes, seven Strategic objectives and single overarching goal contained in the AgroMatrix, to determine how much progress the national programs have made in moving toward the Shared Vision 2015. Indicators relating to the three hierarchical levels of the desired situation are also required. As indicated in Technical Note 3: the Monitoring activities will form the base for the measurement through time, based on the quantitative Indicators, that indicates the status and trends of the subject of interest. The Indicators will also involve determining if identified proposed and/or probable activities were implemented. The set of Indicators on agriculture and rural life will meet the need to complement the information provided in the reports on strategic actions accomplished under the AgroPlan and Jagdeo Initiative, as well as actions under national agricultural development plans.

The information provided by the Performance Indicators must be complemented by the reports from National Experiences in implementing actions towards improving agriculture and rural life. Thus the assessment of progress with the implementation of the Agro Plan and Jagdeo Initiative, together with information on the status of agriculture and rural life, will serve as basic input for adjusting the plan and tailoring it on an ongoing basis to circumstances as they evolve. The intention is that these two components will provide a more comprehensive assessment of how close or far countries are from the desired situation as define in the hemisphere (AgroPlan), Region (Jagdeo Initiative) and at the national level. The result is credible information for expanding and/or adjusting development plans.

The importance of establishing credible and measurable Performance Indicators cannot be understated. Defining these Indicators also required cooperation at all levels and at all stages, from their initial identification, to the development of methodological worksheets which will provide guidance for data collection, analysis and reporting. A Sample Methodological Worksheet and Report follows.

**SAMPLE OF AN INDICATOR METHODOLOGICAL WORKSHEET AND ANALYSIS**

**Variable: Agricultural Productivity**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Cell II | AgriFood Value Chain | **Relevance:** |
| Purpose | To measure the economic performance of the Agri-Food sector | An increase or reduction in the total area planted or harvested, or in the number of animals, is a reflection of decisions made by producers based on market conditions and their ability (access to information, assets, infrastructure and markets) to market changes. |
| Action/Target | Agri-Food Entrepreneurs | |
| Indicators | 1. Growth Rate of crop production, yields and area<br>2. Change in yields by major product: bananas, sugarcane, rice cotton, tobacco | |
| Description | Indicator 1 shows what extent changes in crop yields and area have contributed to production growth over time. Indicator 2 compares yields of main agricultural products across a group of countries. | |
| Coverage | Country-level data. Data for Anguilla are included with those of Saint Kitts and Nevis. | Changes in yields are associated with innovation, input use, and positive or negative climatic and phyto-sanitary events. Physical production is an outcome of both factors. |
| Time reference | Annual estimates. | |
| Data availability | 1961-2004 | |
| Description of variables | Production: crop production data refer to the actual harvested production from the field or orchard and gardens, excluding harvesting and threshing losses and that part of crop not harvested for any reason. Production therefore includes the quantities of the commodity sold in the market (marketed production) and the quantities consumed or used by the producers (auto-consumption).<br><br>Crop area: crop areas generally refer to harvested areas, although for permanent crops data may refer to total planted area.<br><br>Yields per hectare: represent the harvested production per unit area for crop products. For single countries as well as for continental and world totals, they are given in hectogrammes. In all cases, they are computed from detailed area and production data expressed in hectares and metric tones. Data on yields of permanent crops are not as reliable as those for temporary crops either because most of the area information may correspond to planted area, or because of the scarcity and unreliability of the area figures reported by the countries, as for example for cocoa and coffee.<br><br>Production growth: the sum of area and yield growth. | **Trend:**<br>Between 1980 and 2000, the area planted in the main crops increased by 12.8 million hectares, with the rate of increase declining throughout that period.<br><br>The area planted in soybeans increased by 12.5 million hectares, in vegetables by 670,000 hectares, and in permanent crops by 1.7 million hectares (various fruits) and 890,000 (citrus). On the other hand, the area planted with cotton, grains and coffee decreased by 4 million, 1 million and 100,000 hectares respectively.<br><br>Between 2000 and 2004, the area planted in soybeans increased again considerably, and more land was planted in cotton. As for fruits, soybeans and wheat, yields declined between 2000 and 2004. A possible explanation is that production these crops expanded into more marginal areas. |
| Source: | Secondary: FAOSTAT | |

## 7.3 EXPLAINING THE NATIONAL EXPERIENCES COMPONENT

Experiences are essentially a description of the actions undertaken and challenges encountered as countries seek to achieve the stated goals and objectives. These actions will provide the information necessary to explain the rate of progress as measured by the quantitative performance indicators.

Each country, represented by their Ministerial Delegates and/or Alternates, decided on a series of actions that will be necessary to alleviate the constraints to agricultural development and competitiveness in the region. These Strategic Actions (AgroMatrix) and Interventions (Jagdeo Initiative) provide the basis for determining the type of programmes and projects to implements and clear targets to be achieved within a specified time frame. These actions refer to the complete set of national actions, and not only those developed and implemented by Ministries of Agriculture alone since they are not the only 'players' involved in agricultural and rural development at the national level.

All country reports will be contained in a database showing the national actions and the challenges facing the countries for each of the 12 Cells (AgroMatrix Purposes) integrated with the Jagdeo Initiative Interventions. Documenting actions and challenges provides a basis for comparing the types of actions and approaches used by countries to address specific issues. Ministerial Delegates and their technical teams have access to the database on experiences and can identify potential areas for horizontal cooperation among countries. This also provides the basis for establishing linkages among national, regional, hemispheric and international actions and sharing of experiences to optimise scare human, financial and institutional resources. The information will be analysed to determine the status of the interventions taken thus far and to determine gaps in the information. The results from the analysis will inform future interventions and actions to be taken at the national and regional levels. A sample of the e-form follows. It is designed to meet the reporting needs of both Agro-Plan, Jagdeo Initiative and add value to Member States own internal reporting functions.

Technical Note 6:
About 'Expectations" and its role in Economics

The use of expectations in economic theory is not new. Many earlier economists, including A. C. Pigou, John Maynard Keynes, and John R. Hicks, assigned a central role in the determination of the business cycle to people's expectations about the future. Keynes referred to this as "waves of optimism and pessimism" that helped determine the level of economic activity. But proponents of the rational expectations theory are more thorough in their analysis of—and assign a more important role to—expectations.

The concept of rational expectations asserts that outcomes do not differ systematically (i.e., regularly or predictably) from what people expected them to be. The concept is motivated by the same thinking that led Abraham Lincoln to assert, "You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time." From the viewpoint of the rational expectations doctrine, Lincoln's statement gets things right. It does not deny that people often make forecasting errors, but it does suggest that errors will not persistently occur on one side or the other.

Economists who believe in rational expectations base their belief on the standard economic assumption that people behave in ways that maximize their utility (their enjoyment of life) or profits. Economists have used the concept of rational expectations to understand a variety of situations in which speculation about the future is a crucial factor in determining current action.

Rational Expectations by Thomas J. Sargent
http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/RationalExpectations.html

**NATIONAL EXPERIENCES E-DOCUMENTATION/REPORTING SYSTEM**

| Select Strategic Objective | Select Purpose (s): | Select Action (s): |
|---|---|---|
| Competitiveness >> | Promote Competitive Rural Enterprises | Development Policy<br>Strategic Action Plans<br>Government Services<br>Production and Marketing Incentives<br>Financing and Investment<br>Facilities/Professional Advice<br>Legislation, Regulations, Standards<br>Cooperative Development & Group Formation<br>Physical Infrastructure Development<br>Research, Technology and Innovation<br>Facilitating Access to Production Inputs<br>Transportation and Export Marketing Facilities<br>Connectivity and ICT Facilities & Services<br>Information Systems and Databases<br>Training and Skills Development<br>External Relations and Negotiations<br>Natural Resource Management Services<br>>>more >> back to Top >> back to Purpose |
| | Foster Chain Linkages, Integration and Competitiveness | |
| | Create Enabling Policy Environment | |
| | >>more >> back to Top >>Back to Objectives | |
| Environmental Sustainability>> | Promote Good Environmental Practices in Rural Areas | |
| | Promote Integrated Environmental Management in the Chain | |
| | Build an Enabling Regulatory and Institutional framework | |
| | >>more >> back to Top >>Back to Objectives | |
| Equity>> | Improve quality of life/access to services in Rural Areas | |
| | Develop capacities, entrepreneurship & innovation in the Chain | |
| | Promote policies to improve lives and livelihoods | |
| | >>more >> back to Top >>Back to Objectives | |
| Governance>> | Strengthen public/private sector cooperation in Rural Areas | |
| | Strengthen dialogue, partnerships, commitments in the chain | |
| | Promote national policies and rural/hemispheric cooperation | |
| | >>more >> back to Top >>Back to Objectives | |

Explanations:

Select Strategic Objective

Since the AgroMatrix is agreed to be the common denominator, the frame of reference will be the 4 Strategic Objectives of the sustainable development concept. The key elements/parameters of these Specific objectives as they relate to each 'actor' category will be clearly defined and explained. This provides the user with the option to choose which area to report on based on a 'pull-down menu' of the choices for that selection – the Cell Purposes.

Select Purpose

The purpose reflects those of each AgroMatrix Cell, by Dimension, as they relate to the Specific Objective Each individual option will have a "What is this" prompt with a brief explanation. It will also provide the option to go to a more detailed explanation of the topic and its relationship in the wider AgroMatrix and Jagdeo Initiative.

Select Action (s)

In order to ensure consistency among reports and to focus the content of the reports being submitted, one 'almost exhaustive' set of actions common to all selections under Purpose/Objectives will be defined. Selection of one category of 'Actions' will take user to a specific form for data entry designed to obtain the most relevant information in a concise manner. The user will have the option to 'submit now' or 'hold and submit later for editing purpose. Each form will be accompanied by its specific description, instructions, Sample entries in each cell as a reference pdf file.

# 7. THE HYBRID MEAGRISYS - PUTTING THE COMPONENTS TOGETHER

The information system is based on a conceptual framework and on a structure which were presented in the two previous sections. This is why, in order to grasp the dynamics of the system that is required, it is of the utmost importance to have a clear understanding of the conceptual framework and structure and of the relationship between them to achieve the purposes of monitoring and evaluation.

In this sense, it is necessary to differentiate between the two aspects of this relationship between the conceptual framework and the structure of the system since the dynamics of same are based on it:

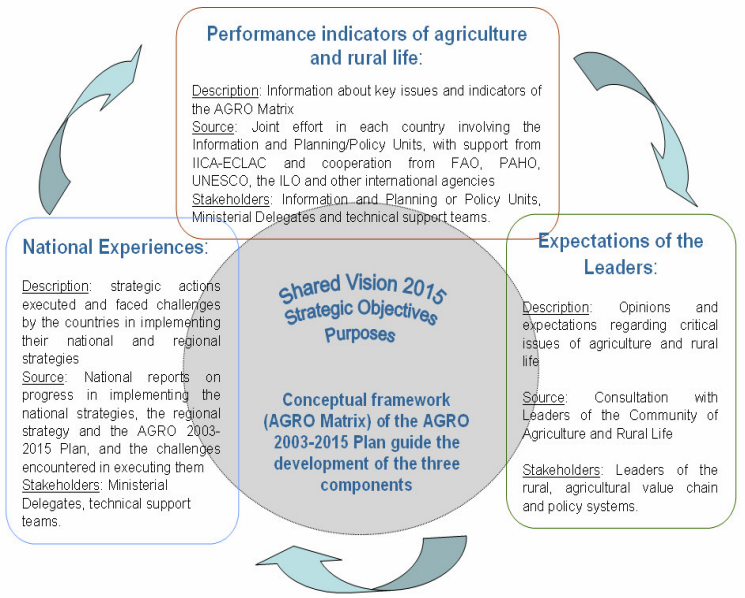
(i) the two pillars of the AGRO-Matrix, its systemic conception and the sustainable development approach define the twelve spaces that are used to organize the data and information generated by the three components of the structure of the system (actions, performance and expectations);

(ii) the three hierarchical levels of the desired situation (purposes, strategic objectives and single overarching goal of the AGRO-Matrix) define the reference points for identifying gaps between what is expected and what is actually achieved in terms of the performance of agriculture and the expectations of leaders.

Adjustments will be made in the strategies, policies and actions, based on these gaps. The hope is that an understanding of these gaps will impact on the behaviour of stakeholders.

The three components of the system need to be coordinated in such a way as to facilitate a comprehensive reading of activities carried out, challenges faced, the performance of agriculture and rural life and the opinions and expectations of leaders on critical issues in agriculture and rural life and how they evolve. Based on this information, as well as an analysis and evaluation, information will be gleaned as to what adjustments need to be made in the strategies, policies and actions to improve their effectiveness in terms of the desired objectives and progress.

This information system cannot be designed to correct all the deficiencies of agricultural information in the region. In its initial stages, it must meet the specific and current needs of the AgroMatrix and Jagdeo Initiative. It should also possess the capacity to incorporate, where appropriate, future requirements of these and other major agendas that share similar goals and objectives. The process must be built on shared roles and responsibilities of all major actors, including the Ministries of Agriculture (MoA), development organizations and the 'stakeholders' themselves. These roles will however differ based on the mandates and scope of decision-making and actions. Ministerial Delegates and/or their Alternates, from the MoAs, are very essential to leading, coordinating and building continuity in the process.



The Circuits of the System

That relationship between the AgroMatrix Conceptual Framework and the MEAgriSys components defines its dynamics in terms of six circuits.

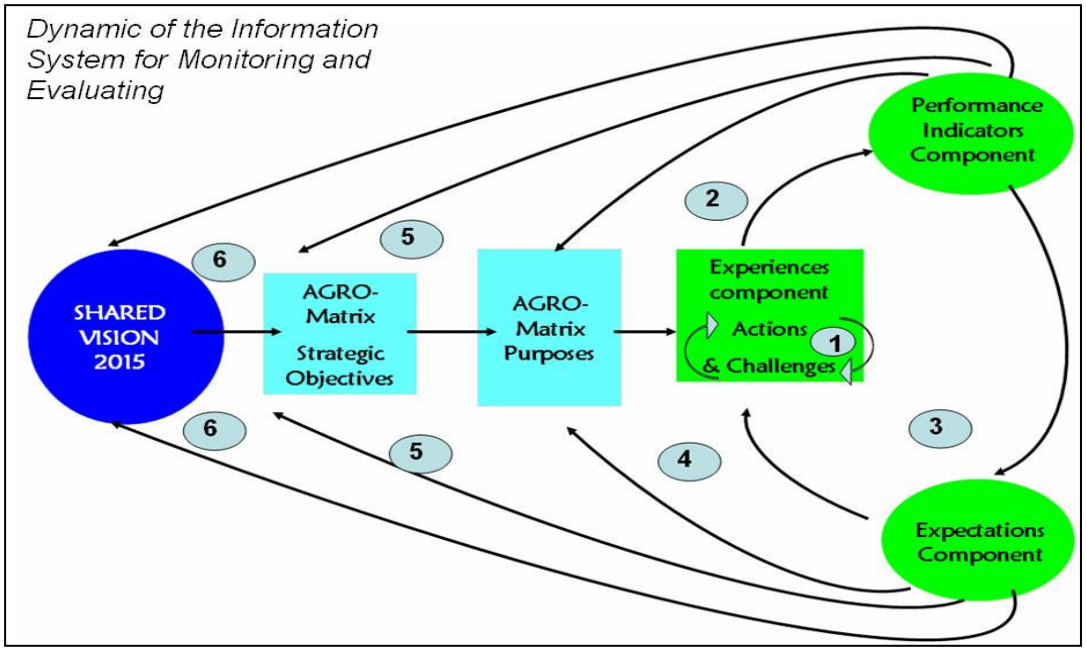
- Circuit 1 takes into account the relationship between actions and challenges relating to the "National Experiences" Component.
- Circuit 2 links the "National Experiences" Component to the "Performance Indicators of Agricultural" Component and to the Purposes of the AgroMatrix and Key Areas for Intervention in the Jagdeo Initiative. That circuit makes it possible to pinpoint gaps between agricultural performance and the targeted goals.
- Circuit 3 links the "Performance Indicators" Component to the "Expectations" Component and this Component is in turn linked to the "National Experiences" Component.
- Circuit 4 links the "Expectations" Component to the Purposes of the AgroMatrix.

Circuits 2 and 4 link the results of the three components of the system to the Purposes of the AgroMatrix; this will allow the identification of gaps of the results of the performance of agriculture and rural life and the expectations of leaders with the indicators of the purposes of the AgroMatrix. These gaps will be useful in adjusting actions, policies or strategies, or even, depending on the result of the analysis and synthesis, adjustments could also be made in the Purposes.

- Circuit 5 links the "Performance Indicators" and "Expectations" Components to the Strategic Objectives of the AgroMatrix.
- Circuit 6 links those components to the single overarching goal of the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu.

Circuits 5 and 6 facilitate the identification of gaps of the results of the performance of agriculture and rural life and the expectations of leaders with the indicators of strategic objectives and the single overarching goal. These gaps serve as a reference point in adjusting the strategic objectives and, accordingly, the purposes and actions, policies and strategies. Adjustments could even be made in the Shared Vision 2015 and the Key Areas for Intervention in the Jagdeo Initiative, based on the results of circuit 6.

*Dynamic of the Information System for Monitoring and Evaluating*



# 8. MEAGRISYS COMMON INDICATOR SET

## 8.1 THE EVOLUTION OF THE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

IICA and ECLAC have held two initial joint workshops aimed at identifying Indicators for use in monitoring the Plan. Participants included Ministerial Delegates, other country representatives and officials from international organizations (FAO, PAHO, UNESCO, OAS, IDB) and other regional entities (OECS, CARICOM, CARDI, UWI, CAFY and CABA). Emerging from a workshop held in Santiago, Chile (November 2004), an initial set of 204 Indicators were identified in 12 Indicator Worksheets (IWs) to correspond to the 12 cells of the AgroMatrix.

For the Caribbean, identifying a basic set of indicators for follow-up is an important step towards the development of an information system for monitoring Agro Plan 2015 and Jagdeo Initiative. This was done in two main workshops:

- August 2005, a regional 'Benchmarking Indicators CTA-financed Workshop (Trinidad) reviewed the initial set of indicators, with emphasis on their relevance to the Caribbean.
- July of 2006, Briefing Meeting of National Data Consultants (CTA-financed MEAgrISys project) was held in Trinidad to explain the 3 components of the system and further review the Indicators with specific emphasis on their applicability to the stated purpose of each of the 12 AgroMatrix Cells.

Emerging from these efforts, the Indicators have undergone extensive revision in terms of:

- establishing the areas of convergence between the AgroMatrix and the Jagdeo Initiative;
- establishing the exact intent of the Purpose of each individual Cell, which are largely micro in nature;
- defining the main Variables or Topics of interest as the main subject for analysis;
- matching the set of Indicators to the Cell's Purpose to ensure their appropriateness to measure progress towards the specific purpose of the Cells;
- extracting from the set of Indicators, those of a more macro nature that are not specific to the individual Cells, but provide general baseline information on the Dimension and its Strategic Objective;

There is a sub-set of Indicators for which collection systems and information are readily available among regional and international organizations. Generally this sub-set contains largely macro-type Indicators or those more relevant to the Policy System.

Macro/sectoral indicators are not sufficient to explain the real situation as it relates to three major actors/players of the agricultural and rural economy– rural stakeholders, Agri-Food chain stakeholders and policy makers– the specifics of the AgroMatrix Cells. It is the combined actions of the rural and Agri-Food chain stakeholders and the quality and results of these in the context of the enabling policy and institutional environment put in place by the policy makers that provide the basis for making statements on sectoral performance. There was therefore a need to 'define' micro-indicators which would be used to measure performance of the sector in specific areas and in keeping with the specific purposes of the 12 Cells.

All together the inputs of the workshops/meetings have led to the generation of a full and final Set of Regional Indicators which will be used to guide development efforts in agriculture and rural communities at the national level. The Indicators identified represent the basic set of information that will be standard across countries, required to make a meaningful determination of progress towards this Purpose. Not all countries will be expected to collect information on the complete set, or in the same timeframe, but that the set that they have capacity for should be standard across countries; building that capacity is a gradual process over time. Certain indicators have different periodicity hence not all need to be collected within a year, that year has to be defined as a calendar year.

## 8.2 Indicators to Measure Competitiveness of Rural and Agri-Food Businesses

Given the importance of the objective of Competitiveness for fuelling economic growth, some additional information is provided to provide further guidance on this topic.

- Why the focus on entrepreneurship?

Competitive business is a critical driver for long run sustainable rural and agricultural development. This requires entrepreneurs who are capable of meeting international market requirements, innovative and productive. Development agencies see rural entrepreneurship as an enormous employment potential; farmers see it as an instrument for improving farm earnings; and women see it as an employment possibility near their homes which provides autonomy, independence and a reduced need for social support; politicians see it as the key strategy to prevent rural unrest

- What are the requirements?

In the context of the Purposes of the AgroMatrix to 'Promote Competitive Rural Enterprises' (Cell I) and 'Forge Linkages, Integrate Chains and Enhance Productivity' (Cell II), the process of entrepreneurship, whether in rural or urban areas, or in agriculture or non-agriculture activities is not important in itself. To grow and sustain competitive business, all entrepreneurs need access to capital, labour, markets and good management skills, technology, buildings, communications and transportation infrastructure, distribution channels, professional advice and skilled labour. What differs is the availability of markets for these and other inputs which tend to be easier to find in urban areas. Consequently, entrepreneurial behaviour is most lacking in rural areas where it is most needed i.e., where the scarcity of critical inputs is the highest.[1]

- Why the specific focus on Rural Territories?

For Rural Territories, entrepreneurship involves finding a unique blend of resources, either inside or outside of agriculture. Entrepreneurial orientation to rural development would create jobs and add economic value to a region and community and at the same time keep scarce resources within the community. Entrepreneurship in rural areas is usually community based, has strong extended family a relatively large impact on a rural community.

- What are the implications for the Policy System?

From the Policy perspective (Cell III) policies and programmes targeted specifically to the development of entrepreneurship do not differ much with respect to location (rural or urban). Policies and programmes are needed to increase the supply of entrepreneurs; to develop the market for critical inputs into successful entrepreneurship, to increase the effectiveness of entrepreneurs and to increase demand for entrepreneurship. Such enabling policies can significantly speed up entrepreneurial activities at national, regional and community levels.

- How will such progress be measured?

Measuring progress towards promoting competitiveness in the agriculture sector and rural areas will be based on key variables as indicated in the Indicator Worksheets. The information obtained from these Variables/Indicators will be of paramount interest to policy makers, potential investors and rural producers themselves seeking to improve the quality of life for individuals, families and communities through entrepreneurship. The information may be used to reorient both rural and agricultural development policies and to improve the design and implementation of programmes and projects targeted more specifically at the development and channelling of entrepreneurial talent at the national level.

- What are the sources of the information?

1 Entrepreneurship and supporting institutions: an analytical approach - "Entrepreneurship as an economic force in rural development' Keynote paper presented at the Seventh FAO/REU International Rural Development Summer School, Herrsching, Germany, 8-14 September 1994. T. Petrin FAO, Regional Office for Europe! Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy

Since it is private individuals, firms, and companies that conduct business and compete, the origin of the information required to measure progress towards competitiveness in the Agri-Food Chain and Rural Territories are the entrepreneurs themselves. There will be differences among and within countries with respect to the existence of systems to consistently collect this information. Some of the more macro Indicators of Competitiveness are being systematically collected by regional and international organisations, such as the CARICOM Secretariat, FAO, IICA, ILO, UNESCO, UN ECLAC, World Bank etc. In such situations, mechanisms will be developed to create firm linkages between these organisations to facilitate such data and information flows.

A similar approach can be taken to organise the determination of Indicators for the other Three Dimensions of Sustainable Development from the Common Set that is of most relevance to Individual Countries.

| **ECONOMIC DIMENSION – COMPETITIVENESS OBJECTIVE** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Cell I Performance Indicators- Worksheet N°. 1** | | |
| Purpose: | Promoting competitive rural enterprises by creating know-how and opportunity | |
| Objective: | To determine the trends in rural business development, their rate of growth and competitive status | |
| Actor/Target: | Rural Entrepreneurs | |
| Topics | Indicators | Sources |
| Rural entrepreneurs and Innovative Capacity | 1. Percentage of agriculture to non-agriculture rural enterprises by type of activity | National: from Ministries responsible for Rural, Agriculture, Tourism, Industry, Community, Cooperative, Entrepreneurship Development, NGOs, rural Associations/ Cooperatives; Gender, obtained through Census, Household surveys, questionnaires, etc. |
| | 2. Percentage of rural women entrepreneurs to total rural entrepreneurs by type of activity | |
| | 3. Percentage of rural-based enterprises with formal linkages to urban and foreign enterprises/companies | |
| | 4. Percentage of total rural enterprises by type, size and gender in government support programmes | |
| | 5. Percentage of rural business with access to new technologies and information networks by size, age and gender | |
| **I**nstitutional **S**upport | 6. Government expenditure on productive infrastructure and services in rural districts (US$M) | National: from Ministries responsible for Finance, Public Utilities, Rural, Community; NGOs, financial institutions (Credit Unions, Development Banks (etc) |
| | 7. Number of available sources of connectivity in rural districts by type | |
| | 8. Number of incentives and special programmes for small business development by type, gender and age | |
| | 9. Expenditure on rural business development projects and services by source (government, external, NGOs)and type | |
| | 10. Number of financial instruments and services for rural businesses by type and size of portfolio | |
| | 11. Credit for rural business by type of financing (loan, grant, joint venture, other innovative types) and business activity (US$M) | |

| Cell II Performance Indicators - Worksheet N°. 2 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Purpose: | Forging linkages, integrating chains and enhancing their competitiveness | |
| Objective: | To measure the economic performance of the Agri-Food sector in domestic and external markets | |
| Actor/Target: | Agri-Food Chain Entrepreneurs (from farm-to-table) | |
| Topic | Indicators | Sources |
| Agri-Food entrepreneurs and Innovative Capacity | 12. Number of Agri-Food producers classified by type of land tenure (ownership, leasing, occupancy) | National: Ministries of Agriculture, Tourism, Industry, Rural and Community Development, Cooperative and Industry Development etc., particularly from Agriculture Census (which are usually not designed to capture non-food, post-farm linkages) and Agribusiness surveys. Data also available from regional and international organisations, (ECLAC, FAO , etc) |
| | 13. Number of Agri-Food producers by type of activity (food or non-food) (primary, processing, services) size, age and gender | |
| | 14. Percentage of active in total farmers by type of activity size, age and gender | |
| | 15. Percentage of commercial in total farmers by type of activity, size, age and gender | |
| | 16. Number of value-added (processing) activities by type of activity, size and gender | |
| | 17. Percentage of MSMEs to large-scale Agri-Food producers by type of activity and gender | |
| Chain Organisation and Integration | 18. Number of integrated production systems by industry | National: Ministries of Agriculture, Trade, Tourism, Community Development, Cooperative and Industry Development, Registrar of Companies etc., Industry Associations and Individual Industries |
| | 19. Number of agri-export clusters by product type and size | |
| | 20. Number of rural agri-cooperatives by type and gender | |
| | 21. Number of firms with contracts with foreign companies | |
| | 22. Ratio of local content to imported inputs in processing by type of activity (%) | |
| | 23. Number of import-based packaging/distribution firms in Agri-Food chain | |
| | 24. Extent of local demand/use of locally produced Agri-Food products | |
| | 25. Percentage of disbursed in total credit available for agri-food industries' development | |
| Level of Private Sector Investment | 26. Foreign Direct investment in local Agri-Food enterprise/industries by type of activity (US$M) | National: Ministries of Agriculture, Trade, Community Development, Cooperative and Industry Development, Registrar of Companies etc., Industry Associations and Individual Industries. |
| | 27. Number of food quality and food safety certified agro-industries (eg. HACCP, BPA, BPM, ISO) | |
| | 28. Expenditure on R&D and marketing in leading products in major firms/industries | |
| | 29. Percentage of firms using improved technologies and information systems by activity, size, age and gender | |
| | 30. Percentage of firms with risk management instruments/facilities by type of activity | |
| Agri-Food Chain Contribution to | 31. Economically Active Population (EAP) in agriculture by sub-sector/major industry | National: Ministries of Finance, Economic Development, |

| Cell II Performance Indicators - Worksheet N°. 2 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Purpose: | Forging linkages, integrating chains and enhancing their competitiveness | |
| Objective: | To measure the economic performance of the Agri-Food sector in domestic and external markets | |
| Actor/Target: | Agri-Food Chain Entrepreneurs (from farm-to-table) | |
| Topic | Indicators | Sources |
| Employment and Earnings | 32. Agriculture value added by agricultural worker (US$) | Agriculture, Trade, Tourism, Community Development, Cooperative and Industry Development, Registrar of Companies etc., Industry Associations and Industries. Regional and international orgs. |
| | 33. Total Agri-Food value-added by sectoral composition (US$) | |
| | 34. Percentage of total Agri-Food value added to total GDP | |
| | 35. Trends in agro-industrial employment (No. of jobs) | |
| Agricultural Productivity | 36. Change in agricultural labour productivity (%) | |
| | 37. Change in yields by product (hectograms-hectares) | |
| Trade Dependence and Performance | 38. Total Agri-Food exports by type (food, non-food) (US$M) | National: Ministries of Trade, Agriculture. These data can also be complemented with that available from regional and international databases such as that of ECLAC, FAO, COMTRADE |
| | 39. Percentage of primary and unprocessed products in total value of Agri-Food exports (%) | |
| | 40. Percentage of total Agri-Food exports in total merchandise exports (%) | |
| | 41. Percentage of total Agri-Food imports in total merchandise imports (%) | |
| | 42. Agri-Food balance of trade by type (food, non-food) (US$'000) | |
| | 43. Share of total Agri-Food exports in world Agri-Food exports by major regions (%) | |
| | 44. Percentage of the value of preferential and non-preferential in total Agri-Food exports (%) | |
| | 45. Number of agriculture trade agreements/obligations (multilateral, regional, bi-lateral) | |
| | 46. Percentage of approved Agri-Food legislation in compliance with international obligations | |
| | 47. Number of NTBs for Agri-Food imports | |
| | 48. Frequency index of non-tariff barriers | |
| | 49. Average ad valorem rate on Agri-Food products | |
| | 50. Percentage of imports by tariff lines with over 20% duty in total Agri-Food tariff lines (%) | |

| Cell III Performance Indicators - Worksheet N°. 3 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Purpose: | Promoting an enabling environment for competitive agriculture (growth policies ) | |
| Objective: | To determine the relative 'positioning' of rural and agricultural development in the national policy and growth strategies | |
| Actor/Target: | Policy Makers (national and regional) | |
| Topics | Indicators | Sources |
| Macroeconomic Policy Environment and Institutional Support | 51. Number of special policies and strategies for entrepreneurship development in Rural Territories and Agri-Food Chain | Ministries of Finance, Trade and Agriculture |
| | 52. Government expenditure for rural and agricultural development as a percentage of total expenditure | |
| | 53. Government expenditure for rural and agricultural development as a percentage of total agriculture value added (%) | |
| | 54. Government expenditure for agriculture by EAP in agriculture (US$M, in 2000) | |
| | 55. Government expenditure on incentives and support by type (inputs, R&D, equipment etc) (US$) | |
| | 56. Percentage of national budget invested in productive infrastructural development (road, port, market, rail, energy, research facilities, telecommunication and water) | |
| | 57. Percentage of total infrastructure coverage in rural & urban areas by type (% of country) | |
| | 58. Government financial support to farmer's organizations and agri-business associations | |
| | 59. Percentage of approved to active agriculture and rural development projects by type and funding source | |
| | 60. Number of trained policy and planning specialists in the Ministry of Agriculture | |
| | 61. Number of trained agribusiness development specialists in the Ministry of Agriculture | |
| | 62. Number of farmers to an extension agent | |
| | 63. Number of scientific research institutions by type of activity and funding source | |
| | 64. Number of public/private/university collaborative research projects/programmes by type | |
| Trade Policy Regime and Extent of Liberalisation | 65. Number of legislative and trade instruments to facilitate Agri-Food production and domestic marketing by type | National: Ministries of Trade and Agriculture; regional organisations, such as CARICOM Secretariat, International organisations, such as WTO, |
| | 66. Percentage of requests for CET suspensions/derogation granted to Agri-Food firms by type of activity per annum | |
| | 67. Number of agriculture trade agreements/obligations (multilateral, regional, bi-lateral) | |

| Cell III Performance Indicators - Worksheet N°. 3 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Purpose: | Promoting an enabling environment for competitive agriculture (growth policies ) | |
| Objective: | To determine the relative 'positioning' of rural and agricultural development in the national policy and growth strategies | |
| Actor/Target: | Policy Makers (national and regional) | |
| Topics | Indicators | Sources |
| | 68. Percentage of approved Agri-Food legislation in compliance with international obligations | |
| | 69. Number of NTBs for Agri-Food imports | |
| | 70. Frequency index of non-tariff barriers | |
| | 71. Average ad valorem rate on Agri-Food products | |
| | 72. Percentage of imports by tariff lines with over 20% duty in total Agri-Food tariff lines (%) | |

# 8. MEAGRISYS COMMON INDICATOR SET

## 8.2 INDICATORS TO MEASURE THE LEVEL OF ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND PRACTICE IN RURAL AREAS AND THE AGRI-FOOD VALUE CHAIN

| ECOLOGICAL DIMENSION – SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE | | |
|---|---|---|
| Purpose | General Baseline Indicators (Macro) | |
| Objective | Establishing the national natural resource base | |
| Topics | Indicators | Sources |
| Water Resources | 1. Number of available natural water sources for production | National sources, particularly Agriculture, Physical Planning, Environment, Public Health, Disaster Offices, Regional and International organisations databases, such as ECLAC, FAO, and global projects, such as, GEF, WWF, etc |
| | 2. Number of water development projects by purpose | |
| | 3. Annual rainfall by area (cm) | |
| Land Resources | 4. Agricultural land as a percentage of total area | |
| | 5. Change in total agricultural land use (%) | |
| | 6. Agricultural land use by type (crops, livestock, aquaculture etc) ('000 ha) | |
| | 7. Variation in cultivated/pasture area by major products | |
| Forest Resources | 8. Total forest cover ('000 ha/annum) | |
| | 9. Growth rate of forest cover (% every 5 years) | |
| | 10. Total cultivated forest as percentage of total forest cover (%/annum) | |
| Fisheries Resources | 11. Total estimated marine fisheries stock by type | |
| | 12. Annual reduction in marine fishery stock fisheries | |
| Resource Vulnerability and Degradation | 13. Percentage of natural resource degradation by type of resource and source of effect | |

| Cell IV Performance Indicators - Worksheet No. 4 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Purpose | Promoting good environmental practices in rural areas | |
| Objective | Measuring Progress towards Environmental Sustainability in Rural Areas | |
| Actor : Target | Rural Entrepreneurs/Inhabitants | |
| Topics | Indicators | Sources |
| Quality of natural resources in/or close proximity to rural areas | 14. Number of annual public awareness programmes on environmental management in rural areas | National – Community level information, from specific communities, NGOs, and Ministries of Agriculture, Tourism, Industry, Rural and Community Development, Environment, Education, Public Health |
| | 15. Number of community-based special programmes promoting environmental management by type, age and gender | |
| | 16. Number of rural households participating in environmental management programmes by type | |
| | 17. Number of community-based groups engaged in environmental management project planning and implementation | |

| Cell IV Performance Indicators - Worksheet No. 4 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Purpose | Promoting good environmental practices in rural areas | |
| Objective | Measuring Progress towards Environmental Sustainability in Rural Areas | |
| Actor : Target | Rural Entrepreneurs/Inhabitants | |
| Topics | Indicators | Sources |
| | 18. Number of business units by type (Agri-Food/Non-Agri-Food) using sustainable environmentally principles | |
| | 19. Percentage of enterprises by type (Agri-Food/Non-Agri-Food) meeting international certification/standards (eg. GAP; EurepGap, ISO 14 000, green-stamped, IFOAM etc) | |
| Community-Based Disaster Management Capacities | 20. Number of rural persons trained in good environmental practices and disaster management | National – Community level information, from specific communities, NGOs, and Ministries of Agriculture, Tourism, Industry, Rural and Community Development, Environment, Education, Public Health, Disaster Offices |
| | 21. Number of special community-based programmes for disaster management by type and gender | |
| | 22. Existence of community-based early warning systems | |

| Cell IV Performance Indicators - Worksheet No. 5 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Purpose: | Promoting integrated environmental management from farm to table | |
| Objective: | Measuring Progress towards Environmental Sustainability in the Agri-Food Chain | |
| Actor/Target: | Agri-Food Chain Entrepreneurs (from farm-to-table) | |
| Topics | Indicators | Sources |
| Application of sustainable resource management (SRM) principles | 23. Percentage of agricultural to total land area using environmentally-friendly practices (%) | National – Community level information, from specific communities, NGOs, and Ministries of Agriculture, Tourism, Industry, Rural and Community Development, Environment, Education, Public Health; Industry Associations, Bureau of Standards, etc. |
| | 24. Irrigated agricultural land as a percentage of total agricultural land. | |
| | 25. Number of farms implementing SRM principles (eg. GAP;) | |
| | 26. Percentage of total area under land zoning, regionalization (pest/disease free zones) systems | |
| | 27. Number of non-farm units by type (food/non-food) using SRM principles (GMP, HACCP etc) | |
| | 28. Number of agro-industries (by type) meeting international certification /standards (eg. HACCP, GMP, ISO 14 000) | |
| Utilisation of Agro-chemicals | 29. Total annual fertilizer stock (inorganic/organic; imports and domestic production) (mt) | National, Ministries of Agriculture, Trade, Industry Associations, Individual producers, Input Distributors, Regional and International organisation databases (eg. FAO) |
| | 30. Trends in fertilizer use (inorganic/organic; mt/commodity) | |
| | 31. Total annual insecticide stock (inorganic/organic; imports and domestic production) (mt) | |
| | 32. Trends in insecticide use (inorganic/organic; mt/ commodity) | |

| Cell IV Performance Indicators - Worksheet No. 5 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Purpose: | Promoting integrated environmental management from farm to table | |
| Objective: | Measuring Progress towards Environmental Sustainability in the Agri-Food Chain | |
| Actor/Target: | Agri-Food Chain Entrepreneurs (from farm-to-table) | |
| Topics | Indicators | Sources |
| | 33. Intensity of insecticide use (inorganic/organic); kg/ha agricultural land | |
| | 34. Proportion of annual insecticide stock for non-agricultural use (%; eg. domestic- pest control) | |
| | 35. Trends in fertilizer use (inorganic/organic) (mt/commodity) | |
| | 36. Total annual herbicide stock (imports and domestic production) (mt) | |
| | 37. Intensity of in herbicide use (kg/ha agricultural land) | |
| | 38. Trends in herbicide use (mt/commodity) | |
| Capacity for Risk and Disaster Management in the Chain | 39. Vulnerability index of the Agri-Food Chain to disasters and climate change | National and International organisations |
| | 40. Existence of risk management and insurance services and facilities | National: Ministries of Agriculture, Finance and Financial Institutions |
| | 41. Number of national systems for assessing the sanitary, phyto-sanitary and zoo sanitary status | National: Ministries of Agriculture, Trade Bureau of Standards, Regional and International Organisations; Industry Associations, Industries |
| | 42. Percentage of total units (farms, firms) with own SPS and zoo sanitary emergency capacity | |

| Cell VI Performance Indicators - Worksheet No. 6 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Cell VI Purpose | Participating in building a regulatory and institutional environmental framework (pro-environmental policies) | |
| Objective | Measuring the national policy and planning framework for pro-environment policies in Rural Territories and the Agri-Food Value Chain | |
| Actor/Target: | Policy Makers (national and regional international) | |
| Topics | Indicators | Sources |
| Integration of SRM in Public Policy and Planning | 43. Number of policies for environmental management in Rural Territories and the Agri-Food Chain | National: Ministries of Agriculture, Tourism, Industry, Rural and Community Development, Environment, Education, Public Health; Industry Associations, Bureau of Standards, etc. Financial Institutions<br>Regional and International Organisations |
| | 44. Number of national legislation for environmental management by type of Enterprise/Industry | |
| | 45. Number of incentives and credit programmes for SRM in the Agri-Food chain by type, size of operation, age, gender | |
| | 46. Number of environmental agreements/obligations signed (multilateral, regional) | |
| | 47. Percentage of total national environmental legislation in compliance with international standards | |
| | 48. Percentage of active in total approved legislation for environmental management | |
| | 49. Government expenditure on environmental management programmes by source of funding (US $) | |
| | 50. Number of coordinating mechanisms on environmental standards in Rural Territories and the Agri-Food Chain | |
| Natural Hazard and Disaster Management and Adaptation to Climate Change | 51. Number of coordinating mechanisms between national and regional disaster management agencies | National,<br>Regional<br>International |
| | 52. Existence of early warning systems in accordance with regional, hemispheric and international standards | |
| | 53. Budgetary allocation for disaster management by type of disaster (US$) | |
| | 54. Expenditure on mitigation for losses from natural disasters in Agri-Food Chain | |

## 8.3 INDICATORS TO MEASURE THE LEVEL OF EQUITY PLANNING' OR 'PRO-POOR' POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE

| SOCIAL DIMENSION – EQUITY OBJECTIVE | | |
|---|---|---|
| Purpose | General Baseline Indicators (Macro) | |
| Objective | Establishing the national Socio-economic profile | |
| Topics | Indicators | Sources |
| Demographics | 1. Number of official rural districts in country | National (Statistical Office; Population Census ) Regional International (ECLAC) |
| | 2. Total population by rural and urban ('000) | |
| | 3. Percentage of the rural population in the total population | |
| | 4. Rate of rural-urban migration (%) | |
| Economics & Poverty | 5. Unemployment level by urban and rural areas (%) | National (Statistical Office; Population Census ) Regional International (ECLAC) |
| | 6. Change in Consumer Price Index and food based inflation | |
| | 7. Percentage of rural and urban poor in total population | |
| | 8. Income distribution by urban and rural areas. | |
| | 9. Population without own income by sex and age bracket. | |
| | 10. Number of EAP by type of agricultural and non-agricultural activity in rural areas | |
| | 11. Number of employed rural workers by age group and occupation | |
| | 12. Percentage of employed rural woman in total rural employed by occupation | |
| QoL – Food | 13. Energy supply and undernourished population (kilocalories per person per day, and percentage) | National (Statistical Office; Population Census ) Regional International (ECLAC |
| | 14. Proportion of under-nourished persons in the total population | |
| | 15. Underweight (malnourished) children under the age of 5 (% of total) | |
| QoL – Access to Basic Services | 16. Percentage of population with access to electricity services by location (rural and urban) (%) | National: Ministries of Finance, Economic, Social Development, Public Utilities, etc Regional International, eg. WHO-UNICEF, ILO, UNESCO etc |
| | 17. Percentage of population with access to improved water sources by location (rural and urban) (%) | |
| | 18. Percentage of households with pipe-borne by location (rural and urban) (%) | |
| | 19. Percentage of population with access to improved sanitation facilities by location (rural and urban) (%) | |
| | 20. Percentage of population with access to modern telecommunications services by location (rural and urban) (%) | |
| | 21. Cellular Telephone per 100 people | |

| SOCIAL DIMENSION – EQUITY OBJECTIVE | | |
|---|---|---|
| Purpose | General Baseline Indicators (Macro) | |
| Objective | Establishing the national Socio-economic profile | |
| Topics | Indicators | Sources |
| QoL – Education | 22. Spatial distribution of secondary education institutions | National: Ministries of Finance, Economic, Education Social Development, Public Utilities, etc<br>Regional:<br>Internacional: eg. WHO-UNICEF, ILO, UNESCO etc<br>UNESCO |
| | 23. Average years of schooling of population between 15-24 years by gender in rural and urban areas | |
| | 24. Level of adult literacy (%of population by educational levels) | |
| | 25. Number of ICT-based training facilities in rural and urban areas | |

| Performance Indicators - Worksheet N°. 7 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Purpose | Facilitating improved quality of life and access to services in rural communities | |
| Objective | Measuring progress towards Equity in rural areas | |
| Actor :Target | Rural Entrepreneurs /Inhabitants | |
| Topics | Indicators | Sources |
| Access to services | 26. Number of land titles based on gender, ethnicity and age | National: Ministries of Physical Planning, Housing, Agriculture, Registrar of Titles, Religious Organisations, etc<br>International: ECLAC, ILO etc |
| | 27. Percentage of rural residents with access to financial services and credit by type and gender | |
| | 28. Percentage of rural residents with access to new technologies and information networks | |
| | 29. Distribution of rural homes by type of ownership | |
| | 30. Number of rural persons receiving public assistance for basic services | |
| Quality of Life | 31. Formal education of rural inhabitants, by occupational sector | National: Ministries of Economic Development, Education, Housing, Agriculture, Registrar of Titles, Religious Organisations,etc<br>International: ECLAC, ILO etc |
| | 32. Educational profile of population between the ages of 15-24 and 25-59 in rural areas | |
| | 33. Percentage of rural population benefiting from training and capacity building programmes | |
| | 34. Percentage of rural persons with medical insurance/ social security services, by type of activity | |
| | 35. Percentage of agricultural sector workers covered by medical insurance and social security | |
| | 36. Number of social protection/public assistance programmes for disadvantaged rural persons | |

| Performance Indicators - Worksheet N°. 8 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Purpose: | Developing Capabilities, Expertise and Innovation in the chain | |
| Objective | Measuring progress towards ensuring equitable access to resources and services in the development of the Agri-Food Value Chain | |
| Actor: Target | Agri-Food Chain Entrepreneurs | |
| Topics | Indicators | Sources |
| Developing the Human Resource base for Agri-Food Sector development | 37. Number of specialized courses and training programmes by topic/subject, gender and target | National: Ministries of Agriculture, Education, Economic, Rural Development<br>Regional: Universities; Regional Secretariítas,<br>International: ECLAC, UNESCO ILO, etc |
| | 38. Number of ICT-based training facilities offering agri-business training services by type and target | |
| | 39. Ratio of public to private training and advisory centres and programmes | |
| | 40. Percentage of firms with internal training programmes by type, coverage, level and gender | |
| | 41. Number of on-the-job training programmes by type of activity | |
| | 42. Change in number of persons benefiting from on the job training. | |
| | 43. Change in the number and percentage of employees with formal or specialized training | |
| | 44. Existence of evaluation and accreditation systems | |
| | 45. Number of professionals graduating in Agriculture | |
| | 46. Number of review and updates of agricultural curricula in educational institutions | |

| Performance Indicators - Worksheet N°. 9 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Purpose | Promoting policies to improve lives and livelihoods in Rural Territories and the Agri-Food Value Chain | |
| Objective | Measuring the existence and development of pro-poor policies in the national planning framework | |
| Actor:Target | Policy Makers | |
| Topics | Indicators | Sources |
| Pro-Poor Policy and Institutional Environment | 47. Percentage of national budget invested in basic social infrastructural development (education, housing, health) | National: Ministries of Finance, Economic Planning,<br>Regional: CARICOM Secretariat, CDB etc. |
| | 48. Government per capita investment in agricultural and related training | |
| | 49. Government investment in education as a percentage of total GDP | |
| | 50. Government per capita investment in poverty reduction programmes | |
| | 51. Government expenditure for the production of basic foods | |
| | 52. Amounts allocated to Social Investment Fund in rural areas | |

## 8. MEAGRISYS COMMON INDICATOR SET

### 8.4 INDICATORS TO MEASURE GOOD GOVERNANCE IN THE PROCESS FOR RURAL AND AGRI-FOOD SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

| POLITICAL DIMENSION – GOVERNANCE OBJECTIVE | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Performance Indicators - Worksheet N°. 10** | | |
| Purpose | Strengthen Public and Private Sector Partnerships and Cooperation in the delivery of support and services in Rural Territories | |
| Objective | To measure the environment and tendency towards cooperation and participation in rural areas | |
| Actor: Target | Rural Entrepreneurs/Inhabitants | |
| Topics | Indicators | Sources |
| Process for dialogue in rural areas | 1. Existence of mechanisms for public/private dialogue and participation at the community level | National: Ministries of Community, Rural Development; NGOs, Local Government; Associations; Religious Organisations, etc<br>Regional:<br>International |
| | 2. Average Number of stakeholders participating in consultations | |
| | 3. Average Number of private sector organizations participating in consultations | |
| Public / private sector partnerships | 4. Existence of public-private sector collaboration in rural development programmes (poverty reduction strategies, rural development organizations, sectoral and agricultural consultations, community development, etc) | National: Ministries of Community, Rural Development; NGOs, Local Government; Associations; Religious Organisations, etc |
| Organization of rural communities (gender, age, ethnicity) | 5. Number of producer/community groups and cooperatives by type of activity, gender and age | National: Ministries of Community, Rural Development; NGOs, Local Government; Associations; Religious Organisations, etc |
| | 6. Existence of organization support programmes (capacity for leadership and negotiation) based on a productive, civil or other type of organization | |
| | 7. Incentives for the establishment of rural associations | |
| | 8. Budgetary allocations for community initiatives | |

| **Performance Indicators - Worksheet N°. 11** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Purpose: | Strengthening dialogue, inter-relationships and commitments along the Agri-Food Value Chain | |
| Objective: | Identifying mechanisms and measuring progress towards development of networking, cooperation and dialogue among entrepreneurs | |
| Actor/Target: | Agri-Food Value Chain Entrepreneurs | |
| Topics | Indicators | Sources |
| Mechanisms for negotiation | 9. Number of negotiation committees, commissions or chain by type | National: Industry Associations, Ministries of Agriculture, Trade, Industry Development, Labour |
| | 10. Number and percentage of firms that are part of industry or trade associations | |

| Performance Indicators - Worksheet N°. 11 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Purpose: | Strengthening dialogue, inter-relationships and commitments along the Agri-Food Value Chain | |
| Objective: | Identifying mechanisms and measuring progress towards development of networking, cooperation and dialogue among entrepreneurs | |
| Actor/Target: | Agri-Food Value Chain Entrepreneurs | |
| Topics | Indicators | Sources |
| | 11. Existence of processes that encourage stakeholder participation in dialogue and negotiation | |
| | 12. Number of industrial disputes in the sector. | |
| | 13. Availability of information to facilitate negotiation | |

| Performance Indicators - Worksheet N°. 12 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Purpose: | Promoting enabling national policies and external (regional and hemispheric) cooperation for agriculture and rural life | |
| Objective: | To measure progress towards decentralisation, cooperation and governance within the policy and planning institutional framework | |
| Actor/Target: | Policy Makers | |
| Topics | Indicators | Sources |
| Decentralization | 14. Government expenditure for strengthening local governments as a percentage of total expenditure | National: Ministries of Community, Rural Development; Local Government; |
| | 15. Budgetary allocations to organizations/departments responsible for agriculture and rural life | |
| | 16. Number of programmes aimed at strengthening civil society organizations | |
| Mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation | 17. Existence of policies that encourage dialogue and participation at the community level | National: Ministries of Community, Rural Development; Local Government; NGOs, Associations; Religious Organisations, etc |
| | 18. Number of public/private sector collaborative projects/initiatives at the rural level by type | |
| | 19. Number of NGOs in agriculture and rural development activities by type of activity | |
| Horizontal Cooperation between governments and agencies | 20. Number of horizontal collaboration programmes between/among countries by type/thematic focus; | National: Ministries of Finance, Economic Development, Foreign Affairs<br>Regional: Secretariats, Financial Institutions<br>International Organisations |
| | 21. Existence of mechanism for the participation of the private sector in Public sector policy, programme and project development and implementation | |
| | 22. Public sector resource allocations for technical assistance projects | |
| | 23. Number of agreements between government and regional/international organizations | |
| | 24. Existence of mechanisms for regional and hemispheric | |

| Performance Indicators - Worksheet N°. 12 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Purpose: | Promoting enabling national policies and external (regional and hemispheric) cooperation for agriculture and rural life | |
| Objective: | To measure progress towards decentralisation, cooperation and governance within the policy and planning institutional framework | |
| Actor/Target: | Policy Makers | |
| Topics | Indicators | Sources |
| | dialogue and coordination (eg. CAC, CAS, The Alliance for Sustainable Development in the Wider Caribbean, COTED, CORECA, RIMSA, Ministerial Meetings on Agriculture and Rural Life) | |
| | 25. Participation of agriculture leaders in national mechanisms for the development of codes and standards | |
| Effective management of agricultural development and rural life | 26. Existence of mechanisms for follow-up and monitoring of policies, projects and programmes for the development of agriculture and rural life | National: Ministries of Finance, Economic Development, Foreign Affairs<br>Regional: Secretariats, Financial Institutions<br>International Organisations |
| | 27. Existence of transparency mechanisms for evaluation and impact assessment of results from projects and programmes for agricultural development and rural life | |

# 9 CONCLUSIONS:

********* to be edited

Monitoring and Evaluation are essential components of the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural milieu. There is much that is yet still unknown about the development process and how policies and management actions affect development. What has emerged during the learning process, is that the information base to enable comprehensive and continuous assessment of the impact of policies, programmes and actions on their stated goals is largely absent in several Caribbean countries or incomplete. There must be some minimum information system that establishes a base from which progress can be measures against. The expectation of having a perfect information system from the start as a pre-condition to institutionalize the M&E process in agriculture and rural life is neither practical nor prudent.

The hybrid information system – MEAgrISys - provides a good place to establish that minimum information system and to build on over time. Agricultural and rural development and measuring progress achieved towards same, is a continuous learning process and experience for those involved. The basic foundation for this process and experience is the AgroMatrix, which provides a tool to conceptualize, prioritize and set very specific objectives, targets and actions towards achieving objectives at all levels: macro (national), sectoral, industry and micro. The AgroMatrix can help in two ways: (1) in the analysis of the three categories of actors: rural peoples, Agri-Food chain, policymakers along the four dimensions of sustainable development of agriculture and rural life; and (2) in the synthesis of the results of that analysis in terms of the relationships to the twelve purposes, seven strategic objectives and the one overall goal: the sustainable development of agriculture and the rural communities by 2015. AgroMatrix

MEAgrISys seeks to generate the types of information that is integral to effective decision-making and progress towards this shared 2015 vision 2015. MEAgrISys seeks to provide a common understanding of the set of complex phenomena that underlies the performance of agriculture and the rural communities. The main characteristic of MEAgrISys is its structure based on three components. This is important because agricultural and rural development deals with needs, expectations and behaviours of actors/stakeholders of agriculture Agri-Food chains (food and non-food) and those of the rural system (agriculture and non-agriculture) as well as those in the public sector in charge of advising and taking decisions which affect the performance of the rural system and the Agri-Food chain.

The immediate output of MEAgrISys is to provide a range of information that each set of actor/stakeholder can use to transform into knowledge for decision making. In its initial stages, national reports are essential outputs of MEAgrISys.

What is being developed/refined by MEAgroInfoSys:

- Instrument to capture 'Expectations'
- Form to document 'Experiences' - country actions and challenges
- Indicator Worksheet – 'Performance' to clarify data collection at stakeholder, country, and institutional levels
- Critical Issues to be resolved by Countries for MEAgroInfoSys:
- Proposing practical targets? Vision and Pacing (2015)
- Specifying Country M&E Capacities (MoA Operational Issues)
- Defining the Lead/Most appropriate national agency to coordinate MEAgroInfoSys at Micro (stakeholder) level

The project cannot solve all national problems, or address all the weaknesses of agricultural information in the Caribbean.